

Eviction Protocol Meetings

Hi everyone,

There have been some major changes relating to Tuesday's first session.

We at the Dale Farm end still want everyone to come but Basildon Council (represented by Dawn French) are insisting on downgrading this first session to minimum attendance for "discussion of what should be on the Agenda of the next meeting." (set for 8 April)

In addition (see message below), Basildon have pressured Sean Risdale into withdrawing as chair of this session.

At the meeting I would put our position as follows - and welcome feedback before we meet together at 11 am on Tuesday at Richard's yard. In brackets I have indicated strategy on various points.

(Travellers' thinking, since the days of roadside camping, has always been to gain an extra day, an extra week. And ours is no different today - expect we are thinking in years).

We believe we should be left to stay where we are at least until 2011, which according to Government projections will be ***the year of site provision begins in earnest.***

1) All parties at present are waiting for Mr Justice Collins to issue his ruling on the Judicial Review, expected after Easter.

2) In the event that Basildon gets the go-ahead to instigate a Direct Action operation to "clear" Dale Farm, we would insist on our right to be a party to the mandatory Risk Assessment document that would have to be drawn up ahead of any eviction.

(Once involved in the Risk Assessment we would oppose the employment of Constant because of their past disregard of health and safety regulations. Meanwhile, with the support of Richard Solly and TLRP, we intend to mount a formal complaint against Constant with a view to having his bailiff's licence withdrawn.)

3) In preference to being the victims of Direct Action force, we would be willing to discuss evacuation to agreed legal alternative sites. We are interesting in hearing what assistance the Council can offer. The only alternative at present is the Pitsea proposal (subject to Public Inquiry on 16 and 17 June - and not likely to be available for three years).

4) We are ready to discuss temporary shelter, or temporary sites, to meet the possible eventuality that hundreds would be made homeless

by an eviction. We have met with the Red Cross and we have proposed using land next to Dale Farm, owned by Travellers; or using ground at Terminus Drive, Pitsea.

(We hope with the help of Shelter to challenge the refusal of the Council to consider our Joint Homeless Application).

Finally, Travellers' representatives at today's meeting (Tuesday) will need to refer all or any major issues back to yard-owners and residents for agreement.

Grattan

Dear Grattan

In view of the fact that the Equality Commission is still in the middle of direct legal action of its own against Basildon Council, and secondary action with Barristers in the case of Dale Farm, I have been advised that it would be inappropriate for me to attend the meeting, given that a senior official from Basildon will also be attending.

We obviously don't want to give Basildon Council any pretext which might jeopardise the proceedings in either case - and while I regret personally not being there, I can see the logic of this.

I will ring Richard Sheridan and Martin Trevillion directly to explain this - and will keep closely in touch with you regarding followup to Tuesday.

With Best Wishes

Sean